

ARMY IN 1968 DRAWED CIVIL INSURGENCY

Directive Links Surveillance of Civilians to Officers Warning on Dissenters

Editorial to The New York Times

By RICHARD HALLORAN
WASHINGTON, Feb. 27.—A directive issued by the Army in February, 1968, as part of its program to keep civilians under surveillance, shows that senior officers feared "a true insurgency, should external subversive forces develop successful control" of the racial and antiwar dissidents who were active at that time.

A second document, issued in May, 1968, requested a large number of Government agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency, to provide Army Intelligence with evidence of subversion in left-wing, right-wing, peace and civil rights groups.

The two documents, the Intelligence annex of the Army's civil disturbance plan and the civil disturbance information collection plan, constituted the rationale and the orders that put the Army surveillance of civilians in high gear.

And the two documents show clearly that the Army's domestic intelligence operation was mounted under the orders and with the knowledge of the highest officials in the Johnson Administration.

Representatives of the Army are scheduled to appear before Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr.'s Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights on Tuesday to explain the authority under which the Army operated and the extent of its surveillance activities.

The two documents were superseded last June by a Department of the Army order strictly limiting the collection of information on civilians by the Army.

They reflect the turmoil of day and the manner in which the Government reacted to it. They illuminate the perceptions of the situation of top authorities in the Pentagon, particularly those of Maj. Gen. William D. Yarborough, an expert in psychological warfare who had been the Army's senior intelligence officer and under whose direction the documents were written.

Pointing up the high-level interest, the intelligence annex was attached to a plan drawn up by a group that was chaired by Under Secretary of the Army David E. McGiffert and included Deputy Attorney General Warren Christopher and a special assistant to the President, Stephen Pollak.

The collection plan was an outgrowth of high level meetings in the White House in April, 1968, during and after the riots that followed the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Its distribution list included the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and the National Security Council, of which the President is chairman.

Representative Ogden R. Reid, Republican of Westchester, who was instrumental in persuading the Army to release the two confidential papers, said in Buffalo Saturday that "their release shows the full extent of the Army's pervasive intelligence collection activities during several months in which no military or civilian official blew the whistle on these operations."

Senator Birch Bayh, Democrat of Indiana, who is a member of Senator Ervin's subcommittee, said here that he was "saddened and alarmed by the scope and depth of snooping on peaceful civilians apparent in the plan." He said that "police state tactics" had no place in the United States of America.

The intelligence annex appears to equate dissident elements such as the civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam war and anti-draft movements with subversive conspiracy. It concluded that "meaningful degrees of subversive influence and organized control are distinct future possibilities in the United States civil disturbance problem."

Although the Army conceded that it could not substantiate the allegation, the annex pointed out that dissident elements "are supporting the stated objectives of foreign elements to the U.S.A."

It said that "many leaders of the antiwar and antidraft movement have traveled to foreign countries, including Cuba, East Europe, and North Vietnam to meet with Communist leaders."

"Therefore," it continued, "the possibility exists that these individuals may be either heavily influenced or outright dominated by their foreign contacts."

"They may, in turn, influence their followers, the majority of whom have no sympathy for the Communist cause but are unaware of their leaders' affiliation."

Among the essential elements of information to be gathered, the annex set out "subversive elements in cover and deception efforts in civil disturbances situations;" "strikes or labor and civil disturbances of sufficient magnitude to indicate a probable employment of Federal troops to preserve or restore order;" "changes in Federal, state, or municipal laws, court decisions, referendums, amendments, executive orders, or other directives which affect minority groups;" and "cause of civil disturbance and names of instigators and group participants."

The annex said that "information required to accomplish the mission of the Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Army, will be obtained through all resources available to the commanders, to include intelligence reports, estimates, studies, and special studies prepared by the command."

The civil disturbance information collection plan, which was circulated in more than 300 addresses throughout the defense establishment, Federal Government agencies, law enforcement officials, and the National Guard, was based on what the Army called a long-standing tradition of rendering assistance to state or local authorities in peacetime.

"The current civil disturbance situation dictates a change in the degree to which the Army must seek advance information concerning potential and probable trouble areas and troublemakers."

If the Army must be used to help quell violence, it said, officials "must know in advance as much as possible about the wellsprings of violence and the heart and nerve causes of chaos."

But it cautioned that the Army sought to collect only that information "needed to exercise honest and sound judgment of the measures to be taken in suppressing rampant violence and restoring order."

It prohibited Army intelligence personnel from obtaining civil disturbance information unless ordered by the Pentagon. Similarly, it forbade covert operations without prior approval from Washington. Pentagon officials acknowledged earlier that orders for both had been given from Washington.

The plan asks for reports on "the identity of newspapers, radio, or television stations, and prominent persons who are friendly with the leaders of the disturbance and are sympathetic with their plans."

The plan requires reports on the "failure of law enforcement agencies to properly respond due to indecision, lack of manpower, or lack of will."